

devoted their pens to blazon his glory and his power were sure to be received by him with distinction. On the other hand, as Charlemagne and Louis XIV. owed a portion of the splendor of their reigns to the lustre reflected on them by literature, he wished to appear to patronize authors, provided that they, never discussed questions relating to philosophy, the independence of mankind, and civil and political rights. With regard to men of science it was wholly different; those he held in real estimation; but men of letters, properly so called, were considered by him merely as a sprig in his Imperial crown.

The marriage of the Emperor with an Archduchess of Austria had set all the Court poets to work, and in this contest of praise and flattery it must be confessed that the false gods were vanquished by the true God; for, in spite of their fulsome verses, not one of the disciples of Apollo could exceed the extravagance of the Bishops in their pastoral letters. At a time when so many were striving to force themselves into notice there still existed a feeling of esteem in the public mind for men of superior talent who remained independent amidst the general corruption; such was M. Lemer cier, such was M. de Chateaubriand. I was in Paris in the spring of 1811, at the period of Chénier's death,¹ when the numerous friends whom Chateaubriand possessed in the second class of the Institute looked to him as the successor of Chénier. This was more than a mere literary question, not only on account of the high literary reputation M. de Chateaubriand already possessed, but of the recollection of his noble conduct at the period of the Duc d'Enghien's death, which was yet fresh in the memory of every one; and, besides, no person could be

¹ Marie Joseph de Chénier died in 1811. He had been a fervid Republican, while his brother André had taken the opposite side and had been guillotined in 1794. As Joseph was not believed to have exerted himself to save his brother his opponents delighted to speak of him, by an intentional mistake, as "the brother of *AW* Chénier." Savary, then Minister of Police, claims (tome v. p. 17) to have got Chateaubriand nominated to the Académie; see also Merlet (*Littérature Française*, 1800-15, tome i. p. 245) to same effect. Chateaubriand required some pressing to join what he called a den of philosophers, but his permitting his name to be put forward is not quite consistent with his resignation of his post after the death of the Duc d'Enghien, and with his furious attack in 1814 on the fallen Emperor. For a brief account of the complimentary odes of the period see Merlet, tome i. p. 183, and Savary, tome v. p. 12.